

did not contest those as they went. But we wanted to make sure, as Christine Jennings moved this debate and this argument, as we were going through, that we looked at every single one.

I want to thank the State of Florida. Before we even went to study it, they went through analyzing all the machines. We had the GAO look at every ability of the machines, even miscalculating the machines as they came forward to make sure they were still correct.

The American public can be very proud to know that every vote in the 13th District was counted. The outcome was correct, and Congressman VERN BUCHANAN was elected on that day and still elected today. I want to congratulate the work that was done by the task force.

Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GONZALEZ. Madam Speaker, I just do want to have some parting words to the members of the task force, Congresswoman ZOE LOFGREN, and, of course, my colleague from California, Congressman MCCARTHY, because they really worked very hard. As I indicated, all decisions were unanimous, which made the process go smoothly.

I also want to recognize Congressman DAN LUNGREN from California, who is not an official member of the task force but was present during some of the briefings and was very instructive.

The last thought is, of course, that the task force and the full committee simply were acknowledging the responsibility that is laid before this body, and that is to determine the qualifications and who actually will sit and take the oath and have the great privilege of joining us here in what is often referred to as the people's House.

Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of House Resolution 989.

Madam Speaker, on February 12th the Committee on House Administration unanimously recommended dismissal of the election contest relating to the 13th Congressional district of Florida. The late Chairwoman Juanita Millender-McDonald had established a task force to investigate this contest election in which over 18,000 ballots did not show a vote cast for the U.S. Congressional race in Sarasota County, Florida. Former judge, and our colleague, Representative CHARLES GONZALEZ was appointed Chair, along with Representatives LOFGREN and MCCARTHY as members of the task force. After the task force established the need to investigate, every vote to determine the scope and direction of the investigation was unanimous.

The task force engaged the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to explore whether the voting machines used in Sarasota County contributed to the unusually high number of undervotes. GAO also was instructed to assess whether additional voting machines testing was needed. When GAO recommended further testing in October 2007, the task force directed the GAO to design and execute testing protocols to determine the reliability of the Sarasota County voting equipment.

Last week, the GAO presented its findings and conclusions to the task force. They found that the Sarasota County voting machines did not contribute to the large undervote in the Congressional race for the 13th District of Florida. The GAO acknowledged that the undervote could have been caused by voters who chose not to vote for that race, or by voters who did not properly cast their ballots because of poor ballot design. In any case, the machines were not the culprits. Since that time, some groups have attacked the GAO study as imprecise for a host of speculative reasons. However, the Contestant's central argument in the election contest before the committee was that voting machine malfunction caused the abnormal undervote, and GAO's focus of analysis was directed solely to the voting machine malfunction issue.

Under the Federal Contested Election Act, a Contestant must submit allegations that, if proven, would have altered the election outcome. The task force and the Committee on House Administration have conducted a thorough investigation and believe that the findings of the GAO are compelling. Therefore, the Contestant's argument that malfunctioning electronic voting machines caused the 18,000 undervote in Sarasota County was not supported. For this reason, I urge members to support to passage of House Resolution 989 to dismiss this election contest.

Mr. GONZALEZ. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. All time for debate has expired.

Pursuant to the order of the House of today, the resolution is considered read and the previous question is ordered.

The question is on the resolution.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

□ 1930

HONORING RICHARD JOHNSON, JR.

(Mr. BARRETT of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BARRETT of South Carolina. Madam Speaker, community volunteers run our school boards, our civil centers, help with youth programs, and assist our hospitals. They make a difference to so many and ask for nothing more than an opportunity to give.

Richard Johnson, Jr., is not your average community volunteer, and during Black History Month, I would like to honor him for his dedication to service. A community activist and well-known civil volunteer, Richard has devoted his spare time to promote education, health care, and politics around the Aiken area.

He is not only a volunteer to his region, he has also served his Nation in the United States Army and is a member of the Korean War Veterans Association.

Each of the boards Richard serves, councils he governs, and committees he chairs, bears the benefit of his knowledge, commitment, and experience.

During this month, our Third District of South Carolina recognizes the

true community service of Richard Johnson, Jr., and I proudly thank him for those he has served in his State and in his Nation.

ATPA EXTENSION

(Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, extending the existing Andean Trade Preference Act for Colombia, Peru, Bolivia, and Ecuador through 2008 is a necessary measure, but one that only goes halfway. It cannot substitute for passage of the Colombia Free Trade Agreement, which is of central importance in defending critical U.S. strategic interests in the region.

Colombia has been an indispensable ally in the fight to keep drugs off American streets, and it has successfully battled armies of narcoterrorists even as it has consolidated its democracy. It is a steadfast partner in an increasingly unstable region where enemies of the United States and strategic competitors are making rapid advances.

But the strongest argument for the Colombian Free Trade Agreement is that although it would benefit Colombia enormously, it would benefit the United States even more. Those opposed to the Colombia FTA do not understand that the existing trade preferences give Colombian businesses easy access to U.S. markets but do nothing about giving U.S. businesses greater access to Colombia's markets.

Madam Speaker, only the free trade agreement can do that. Let us pass it soon.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DEFAZIO addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

WRONG DIRECTION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. KAPTUR. Madam Speaker, the favorite question of political pollsters of late is the benchmark right direction/wrong direction question: "Do you think our country is headed in the right direction or the wrong direction?"

This year, most people say "wrong direction," and the reason is because